



Operation Smoke Alarm

Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

Monterey County, California

Pacific Grove, CA - In 1991, the Pacific Grove Fire Department experienced a fire-related death of an elderly resident that did not have an operable smoke detector in her residence. As a result of this tragedy, the Pacific Grove Fire Department initiated Operation Smoke Alarm. Their goal is to prevent future fire fatalities and property loss associated with fires by ensuring that every household has an operating smoke detector.



Local service clubs joined the fire department personnel and canvassed the entire City to identify those households without smoke detectors. The project surveyed over 5,000 single-family homes within the City, making sure there was at least one working smoke detector per household. Survey results revealed that 34 percent of the homes did not have a smoke detector, 9 percent of the homes had smoke detectors that were inoperable.

The local Rotary Club donated smoke detectors and batteries that were given out during this first campaign. The project continues and smoke detectors and batteries are supplied free of charge to those in need. The project is funded through public donations and the fire prevention budget.

Pacific Grove has a large elderly population and they have become faithful “return customers.” Residents who have benefited from the program either visit the fire department or call twice a year to have their smoke detector batteries changed.

Since the project began and operable smoke detectors have been successfully placed in homes, small fires have been detected and extinguished early, thus, preventing loss of life and significant property damage.

Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region IX**

State: **California**

County: **Monterey County**

City/Community: **Pacific Grove**

Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Private**
Hazard Type: **Fire**
Activity/Project Type: **Warning Systems**
Activity/Project Start Date: **02/1991**
Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**
Funding Source: **Local Sources; Non-profit organization (NPO); Private funds**
Funding Recipient: **Property Owner - Residential**
Funding Recipient Name: **Citizens of Pacific Grove**

Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$15,000.00 (Estimated)**

Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal
Disaster? **Unknown**
Value Tested By Disaster? **Unknown**
Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.nfpa.org/>
Reference URL 2: <http://www.pgfire.com/index1.html>

Main Points

- Goal of project is to prevent future fire fatalities and property loss associated with fires by ensuring that every household has an operating smoke detector.
- The project continues, and smoke detectors and batteries are supplied free of charge to those in need. Funded is provided through public donations and the fire prevention budget.
- Residents who have benefited from the program either visit the fire department or call twice a year to have their smoke detector batteries changed.